

Annual Report of the Bay City Area Transportation Study (BCATS) 2005



BCATS 3 YEAR TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

This year, BCATS adopted a new Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for the fiscal years of 2006/07/08. A total of approximately \$60 million in transportation projects were identified in the 3-year program. The program includes a variety of street, highway, bridge, pedestrian, and transit projects that will enhance the safety and efficiency of the transportation system.

Projects that were completed in 2005 included: The Michigan Department of Transportation restoration of the M-13 Connector from I-75 to Grove Street in Kawkawlin, the mill and resurface of M-13 (Euclid Ave) between Fisher Road and Wilder Road, and phase II of the M-84 (Westside Saginaw Road) project that included the construction of a divided, four-lane road between Pierce Road and Delta Road. The city of Essexville reconstructed the intersection of Woodside Avenue and Borton Avenue with minor widening. The city of Bay City completed the Streetscape Enhancement of the Columbus Avenue Corridor. The Bay County Road Commission resurfaced Wilder Road between M-13 (Euclid Avenue) and the M-13 Connector. Other projects completed in 2005 include the completion of the Bangor Township RailTrail and an Access Management project on M-13/Euclid Avenue that coincided with the resurfacing of the road, which resulted in altering 16 access drives onto M-13/Euclid Avenue and closing 17 others.

A few of the projects to be completed in 2006 are listed below:

The Michigan Department of Transportation will restore the M-84/M-13 Bridge (Lafayette Bridge) over the Saginaw River as well as I-75 Bridges and overpasses from Salzburg Road south to the Saginaw/Bay county line. M-25 (Center Avenue) between Livingston Street and Pine Road will be reconstructed and receive streetscape enhancements. MDOT will also replace all the signs along I-75.

The city of Bay City will reconstruct North Henry Street from North Union to Vermont Street as part of a High Priority Project. This is Phase I of a three-phase high priority funded project under the newly signed Transportation Bill called SAFETEA-LU.

The city of Essexville will reconstruct Woodside Avenue from Pine Street to the east city limits.

The Bay County Road Commission will mill and resurface Midland Road from 2 Mile Road to M-13 (Euclid Avenue) and realign the intersection of Cass Avenue and Trumbull Road.

The full and complete historical restoration of the Pere Marquette Railroad Depot.

Bay Metro will continue to upgrade their aging fleet of buses and will be receiving three (3) new buses in 2006.

BCATS COMPLETED THE THIRD ASSET MANAGEMENT REVIEW OF ROADWAY CONDITIONS

The Michigan Asset Management Council was created by Public Act 499 of 2002. To meet the requirements of the Act, the third year of a statewide review of all federal-aid roadways was conducted using resources of the Michigan Department of Transportation and other local agencies. In Bay County, BCATS teamed with the city of Bay City, MDOT and the Bay County Road Commission to inventory the surface condition of 577 miles of streets and highways using the RoadSoft computer program. The third year of data indicates that 75% of the federal-aid roadways in Bay County were rated good to excellent.

LONG RANGE PLAN UPDATE

In April 2005, BCATS approved a mid term update of the 2025 Long Range Plan to create the 2027 Long Range Plan.

In 2006, BCATS will begin to develop the 2035 Long Range Plan to replace the 2027 Long Range Plan which is set to expire in July of 2007. This new plan will identify all of the transportation needs for the BCATS area through 2035. The plan will take into account long and short term strategies/actions that will improve the safety and efficiency of the movement of people and goods through and within the Bay City Urbanized Area. The plan includes road projects, non-motorized transportation, public transit, and beyond.

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING & SAFETEA-LU

On August 10, 2005, President Bush signed the \$244.1 billion, five-year federal transportation funding bill as passed by Congress which is known as SAFETEA-LU, (Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: a Legacy for Users). SAFETEA-LU succeeds the expired Transportation Efficiency Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21).

SAFETEA-LU re-authorizes the federal highway, public transportation, highway safety, and motor carrier safety programs through Fiscal Year 2009. The Bay City Area Transportation Study (BCATS) was designated to carry out the transportation planning process required by TEA-21 and now SAFETEA-LU. Establishment of this process enables BCATS and other transportation agencies within the BCATS area to receive federal funding for a variety of transportation projects including reconstruction and resurfacing of roads and bridges, purchase of transit vehicles, highway and transit safety improvements and pedestrian and non-motorized projects that will efficiently maximize the mobility of people and goods within and through the Bay City urbanized area.

Included in SAFETEA-LU are more than 5000 High Priority Projects throughout the nation. One is located within the BCATS area, the reconstruction of North Henry Street from Vermont Street to Wilder Road, which will be completed in three (3) phases over the next six years and receive \$2.16 million in High Priority Project Funds dedicated specifically for this project.

Currently, the BCATS area includes the cities of Bay City and Essexville and the townships of Bangor, Kawkawlin, Monitor, Frankenlust, Portsmouth, Hampton and Fraser. This is known as the urban transportation planning area.

BCATS COMMITTEES

The Bay City Area Transportation Study (BCATS) is composed of two committees: the Policy Committee and the Technical Committee. The Policy Committee is made up of mostly elected officials from township, city, and county government. The Technical Committee is comprised of transportation planning and engineering professionals from the community. Both committees also have representatives from the Michigan and U.S. Departments of Transportation. The Technical Committee provides valuable expert advice to the Policy Committee on various matters which it must address. The Policy Committee must give final local approval to all plans and projects in the Bay City Urbanized Area which use federal funding.

The Policy Committee usually meets on the third Wednesday of every other month at the Bay County Building, 515 Center Avenue, Bay City, Michigan. While the Technical Committee meets at the same location, usually on the second Tuesday in the same months as the Policy Committee.

Interested persons are always welcome to attend the meetings or call one of the following Technical Committee members to discuss transportation issues of interest:

David Engelhardt, BCATS Director(989) 895-4064
Bay County Transportation Planning Division
engelhardtd@baycounty.net

Michael Stoner, General Manager(989) 894-2900
Bay Metro Transit
mstoner@baymetro.com

Bob Ranck(989) 671-1555
Michigan Department of Transportation
ranckr2@michigan.gov

The county of Bay will provide necessary and reasonable auxiliary aids and services, such as signers for the hearing impaired and audio tapes of printed materials being considered at the meeting/hearing upon ten (10) days notice to the county of Bay. Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aides or services should contact the County of Bay by writing or calling:

Michael Gray, Executive Assistant, Office of the Bay County Executive
515 Center Avenue - Suite 403, Bay City, MI 48708
(989) 895-4130 / (989) 895-4049 TDD

M-25/CENTER AVENUE RECONSTRUCTION & BEAUTIFICATION

M-25/Center Avenue in Bay City & Hampton Township between Livingston Street and Pine Road will be reconstructed beginning in the spring of 2006. Coinciding with the reconstruction of the roadway, the Center Avenue Corridor will undergo a beautification project that involves removing the overhead wiring and burying the wire underground. New sidewalks will be constructed for non-motorized access to the businesses, highlighted by pocket parks and other green spaces, ornamental street lighting, and benches. In the end, this project will enhance the surrounding community and serve as the Eastern Gateway to the Center Avenue Heritage Route.

BAY METRO TRANSIT

Bay Metro Transit has transported more than 22.5 million passengers since 1974. In 2005, service was provided to 68,000 seniors and 260,000 disabled passengers with an overall ridership of 580,000. Bay Metro Transit operated over 1.6 million service miles during the year.

Ridership for Dial-A-Ride (DART), a demand-response service for seniors and the disabled, increased from 53,000 in 2004 to 55,000 in 2005. Bay Metro Transit also subcontracted 20,000 additional rides to local and private carriers. Of all services provided by Bay Metro Transit, the DART service has continued to show the most significant trend in growth.

Each year, Bay Metro Transit has seen a reduction in financial support from state and federal sources. Various studies have been conducted by Bay Metro to determine the cost effectiveness of the variety of services provided. Bay Metro has made service cuts along with reducing overhead costs to become a more efficient service with minimal impact on passengers.

Bay Metro's efforts to replace older vehicles are continuing but at a very slow rate due to funding changes at the state and federal levels. Although three new buses are expected to be delivered in the coming year, BMTA still operates eight buses manufactured 18 years ago (in 1987) and many more over ten years old. Maintaining an older fleet is an expensive proposition, even with a topnotch maintenance department.



M-84/WESTSIDE SAGINAW ROAD WIDENING

Phase II of the M-84 widening project from Pierce Road (in Saginaw County) to Delta Road was completed in November 2005. This portion of M-84/Westside Saginaw Road was reconstructed as a four-lane divided highway from an original two-lane road.

Phase III of the M-84 widening project from Delta Road to M-13/Euclid Avenue has been "deferred pending reasonable assurance of achieving and sustaining system condition goals and the identification of additional funding. MDOT has secured the right-of-way for future construction," according to the Michigan Department of Transportation.

TRI-COUNTY TRAVEL DEMAND MODEL

BCATS, along with the Saginaw Metropolitan Area Transportation Study (SMATS), Midland County, the city of Midland, and MDOT are currently in the process of creating the first Tri-County Travel Demand Model for this area. This model will be the basis for the transportation planning process.

The Tri-County Travel Demand model combines the attributes of roads, recent traffic counts, data on the current population and employees, and future growth projections throughout the three counties. This combination of data in the model will help determine where existing roads may become deficient, what the effects of different transportation network alternatives will be on the traffic patterns, and which option(s) is(are) the most effective at improving transportation within the BCATS area.

The model is scheduled for completion in early 2006. The output from the model will drive the development of the 2035 Long Range Plan.